# Transcript

**00:00:03 Announcer**

The Missouri State Journal, a weekly program keeping you in touch with Missouri State University.

**00:00:10 Emily Letterman**

Christmas is less than two weeks away, but there's still time to spread holidays cheer. If you're looking for a nearly last-minute Christmas gift, consider a social enterprise where your dollars will go twice as far. What's a social enterprise? Think Toms shoes, where proceeds from your purchase go toward a cause or company’s mission. In this example, a pair of shoes for those in need.

I'm Emily Letterman.

Last week on the Missouri State Journal, marketing expert Dr. Josh Coleman talked about social enterprises and how consumers feel about the proposition. Coleman, who's an associate professor of marketing at Missouri State University, is back with me again today. This time, he'll address Christmas with the cause and how consumers can put their money, where their heart is.

**00:00:49 Dr. Josh Colema**n

A lot of what we see in the Christmas season is, you know, consumerism goes up, that the spending goes up. And so there is kind of this idea of, well, if you're going to spend the money anyways, might as well spend it in a socially conscious way.

And so a lot of a lot of times what consumers will do is they'll look for those with one for one models because that's really easy. Just kind of a marketing ploy of, hey, if I buy this product, they'll give to someone in need. And man, I've done a great job this holiday season and helped a lot of people. But I think it is important to look beyond just some of those basic advertising employees and see.

The companies themselves, from which we're buying these holiday gifts and Christmas presents and things like that. If we're going to shop anyways, let's dig into what are these companies about? What do they stand for? Who are their employees? What is their mission?

And maybe see beyond some of those advertising ploys. This happens year round for Christmas time holiday season. We're lot of us are shopping more than we normally do. And so it's just a way to have a good season to have a heightened awareness of what's going on.

**00:01:51 Emily Letterman**

While consumers may want to purchase socially conscious products, Coleman says, which products fit that bill isn't always black and white.

**00:01:58 Dr. Josh Coleman**

So, identifying social enterprises in the marketplace or among retailers is a little tricky because if they don't say anything on the packaging at all, you would never know unless you dig into the website and the story and press into that and find that out. So ,to some extent, if a social enterprise wants to market themselves.

As a socially conscious brand, they've got to package it somehow, but then the catch is consumers see that and go, oh, they're just trying to sell me on the cost. They're really care. They're just throwing that out there, so it's just catch 22.

**00:02:25 Emily Letterman**

When thinking about your holiday purchases and looking to spread the cheer, the easiest place to start may be the fashion industry.

**00:02:32 Dr. Josh Coleman**

There aren't really any specific sectors that are, you know, more geared towards social enterprises than others. We do see though fashion and clothing as one industry that's really easy to press into kind of a give back model or an employment model.

We can employ A Venezuelan shoe makers, and then they're going to make the shoes and we're going to sell them for a higher price in America and give the proceeds back to the Venezuelan shoemaker. Is it? That does seem to be an industry that presses into social enterprises a little more quickly and learn more easily.

**00:03:09 Emily Letterman**

The National Retail Federation expects record spending during the holiday season and forecast retail sales to increase 4% to more than $960 billion. However, Coleman says socially conscious spending is equally as valuable year round.

**00:03:24 Dr. Josh Coleman**

The idea of conscious consumerism is not just for Christmas time. It's for all year round and again, Christmas time is when we buy, maybe more than we normally do, so it it's heightened in our awareness. But what we are seeing is that if we can press into the personal impact that that we can have and just that more that greater awareness of where are my products coming from.

**00:03:47 Dr. Josh Coleman**

What's the what's the behind the scenes? What's the supply chain like? Who's actually making these T-shirts? You know, is it somebody in a third world country who shouldn't be employed at their age or at their income level or is it somebody here in America who's going to give back to people in a third world country whatever the case might be? So that's a key part, I think, year round. It's just that heightened awareness to look beyond the marketing ploys of buy this we give this that's cool and that's great. But where are your products coming? From where your service is coming from and if we can dig into that, then Nets is going to be you around and going to make a better impact on.

**00:04:24 Emily Letterman**

Social enterprises have been the focus of Colman's research since he started his Ph.D. in 2013. They speak to him because their mission aligns with his own desire to make the world a better place. To read more about his work, visit missouristate.edu and search Coleman.

My guest today has been Dr. Josh Coleman, a marketing professor helping spread just a little bit of Christmas cheer.

I'm Emily Letterman for the Missouri State Journal.

**00:04:48 Announcer**

For more information, contact the Office of Strategic Communication at 417-836-6397, the Missouri State Journal is available online@ksu.org.